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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 04 ZAGREB 03082

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ZAGREB 003082

SIPDIS

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
USVIENNA ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 12356: DECL: 8/12/00

TAGS:

SUBJECT: BIHAC SIEGE LIFTED, ATTENTION TURNING TO
ASSISTANCE NEEDS, POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, NEXT
MILITARY MOVES

SUMMARY

1. (C) POLOFFS, REFCOORD, AND DART VISITED BIHAC AUGUST 11 TO ASSESS HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND DISCUSS POLITICAL/MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WAKE OF THE GOC OFFENSIVE TO RETAKE "RSK" TERRITORY. UN OFFICIALS COMPLAINED ABOUT THE INADEQUACY OF UN SAFE AREA POLICY WHICH ONLY PROTECTS BIHAC TOWN, WHILE THE ENTIRE POCKET IS IN RANGE OF SERB GUNS. THEY DISCUSSED THE REFUGEE AND DISPLACED PERSON PROBLEM; CURRENTLY THERE ARE ABOUT 40,000 DP'S IN THE BIHAC POCKET, AND PROBABLY BETWEEN 15-20,000 REFUGEES LOYAL TO FIKRET ABDIC (AND POSSIBLY ALSO INCLUDING "RSK" SERBS) ON THE ROAD NEAR THE VILLAGE OF KRSTINJA IN CROATIA. THE UN ASSESSES THAT A FULLY ARMED V CORPS WILL BE ON THE OFFENSIVE AGAIN IN ONE TO TWO WEEKS
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TO SECURE THE ENTIRE UNA-SANSKI CANTON. MEANWHILE, LOCAL OFFICIALS PROVIDED US WITH A SHOPPING LIST OF REQUIREMENTS FOR REBUILDING LIFE IN THE CANTON AND DISCUSSED THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN MUSLIM AND CROAT RESIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) POLOFFS, REFCOORD, AND DART VISITED BIHAC AUGUST 11 TO ASSESS HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND DISCUSS POLITICAL/MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WAKE OF THE GOC OFFENSIVE TO RETAKE "RSK" TERRITORY.

UNPROFOR VIEWS ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION...

3. (C) POLOFFS MET WITH THE DANISH UN COMMANDER, COL. JASPER HELSOE (PROTECT), AND CIVIL AFFAIRS OFFICER RUS BALLANTYNE (PROTECT) AT BANBAT HQ IN CORALICI. THEY COMPLAINED THAT THE UN SAFE AREA POLICY WAS GROSSLY INADEQUATE IN THE CASE OF BIHAC, WHERE ONLY THE TOWN WAS PROTECTED, BUT THE ENTIRE POCKET WAS IN RANGE OF SERB GUNS. THEY NOTED THAT THE POWER STATION AND WATER TREATMENT PLANT ARE BOTH OUTSIDE OF THE SAFE AREA AND WERE FREQUENTLY TARGETED

4. (U) BOTH STRESSED THAT IT WAS ALL THEY COULD DO TO MANAGE THE VARIOUS FLOWS OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE CANTON THAT HAVE OCCURRED ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY OVER THE LAST FOUR YEAR. THE SMALL SIZE OF THE BIHAC POCKET MEANT THAT ANY TIME SHELLING STARTED, LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WOULD FLEE, USUALLY TO BIHAC TOWN, SEVERELY TAXING LIMITED
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SERVICES AND SUPPLIES. THEY ESTIMATED THAT 20 PERCENT OF THE AREA'S POPULATION FLED FROM ABDIC CONTROLLED TERRITORY TOWARD THE SOUTH. ABDIC'S "REPUBLIC OF WESTERN BOSNIA" ALSO CONTAINED ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF THE AVAILABLE FARM

LAND. AS A RESULT, LOCAL AUTHORITIES WERE FORCED TO FEED MORE PEOPLE FROM LESS LAND. THIS PROBLEM, COUPLED WITH THE INABILITY OF AID CONVOYS TO REACH THE POCKET, HAS CREATED A CONTINUING PROBLEM FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS TRYING TO SUSTAIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. PRODUCE WAS OFTEN CONSUMED BEFORE THE HARVEST AND LITTLE WAS RESERVED TO PROVIDE SEEDS FOR THE NEXT PLANTING.

15. (U) THERE ARE CURRENTLY ABOUT 40,000 DP'S IN THE BIHAC POCKET, AND PROBABLY BETWEEN 15-20,000 REFUGEES LOYAL TO FIKRET ABDIC (AND POSSIBLY ALSO INCLUDING "RSK" SERBS) ON THE ROAD NEAR THE VILLAGE OF KRSTINJA IN CROATIA. HELSOE HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL AT OBTAINING CLEARANCE FROM THE GOC TO VISIT THESE PEOPLE THE DAY BEFORE (SIMILAR PROBLEMS WITH ACCESS HAVE BEEN REPORTED BY UNHCR AND ICRC, SEPTTEL). HELSOE SAID HE NEEDED BOTH ACCESS TO THE REFUGEES FROM THE GOC AND ASSURANCES FROM THE GOBH THAT THESE MEN WOULD BE COVERED BY THE AMNESTY SHOULD THEY WISH TO RETURN HOME TO

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	EB-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-06	L-01
	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-00
	PRS-01	P-01	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-01
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-01	PMB-00	PRME-01
	PRMC-01	DRL-09	G-00	/030W			

-----E2BE5A 121603Z /38

O 121538Z AUG 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6885
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE//J3/J4/J5/POLAD//
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE//DO/LG/XOX/IN/POLAD//
DIA WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USLO SKOPJE
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
HQ JTF PP NAPLES IT//CA/POLAD//
COMSIXTHFLT //N2//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ3/ECJ4/ECJ5/ECPOLAD//
JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
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VELIKA Kladusa. THE UN NEEDS TO HELP ESTABLISH THE
CREDIBILITY OF THE GOBH WITH REFUGEES WHO ARE SCARED OF
RETRIBUTION. THERE ARE RUMORS AMONG THE REFUGEES THAT 100
ABDIC FOLLOWERS ARE STILL IN JAIL IN BIHAC FROM LAST YEAR,
WHEN THE GOBH OFFERED AN AMNESTY (NOTE: CANTON OFFICIALS
CONFIRMED TO US THAT THERE ARE SOME ABDIC FOLLOWERS STILL
IN JAIL UNDER WAR CRIMES CHARGES.) THE UN WOULD LIKE GOBH
OFFICIALS, POSSIBLY AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, TO TALK TO
THE REFUGEES AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO COME BACK.

16. (U) WE HEARD FROM BOTH THE UN AND CANTON OFFICIALS
THAT A DEAL FOR RETURNING THE ABDIC REFUGEES TO VELIKA
KLADUSA HAD BEEN SIGNED BY THE GOC, GOBH, ABDIC, AND
REFUGEE REPRESENTATIVES, EFFECTIVE AUGUST 11. IN AN
ASIDE, GOBH OFFICIALS OPINED THAT ABDIC MUST BE IN CROATIA
IF HE HAD SIGNED THE AGREEMENT. (NOTE: WHEN ATTEMPTING TO
PASS THROUGH THE REFUGEES ON OUR RETURN FROM BIHAC WE WERE
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TOLD BY PEOPLE ON THE ROAD THAT ABDIC WAS PERSONALLY
LEADING THE COLUMN. WE WERE NOT ABLE TO GET TO THE HEAD
OF THE COLUMN TO TRY TO FIND ABDIC BECAUSE REFUGEES WERE
BLOCKING THE ROAD AND WE HAD TO FIND AN ALTERNATE ROUTE.)

AND THE NEXT MILITARY MOVES

17. (C) UN OFFICIALS IN CORALICI NOTED THAT AS A RESULT OF
THE HV DEFEAT OF THE "ARSK," THE PRESSURE ON BIHAC'S
NORTHERN BORDER WAS RELIEVED AND V CORPS COULD REDIRECT
ABOUT 10-12,000 TROOPS TO THE FRONT LINE WITH THE BSA.
ACCORDING TO THE UN, V CORPS NOW HAS A "LIFETIME" SUPPLY
OF AMMUNITION (BALLANTYNE NOTED THAT ON ONE OCCASION HE
SAW TEN 10 TON TRUCKS MOVING SOUTH CARRYING AMMO AND
WEAPONS FOR V CORPS), AT LEAST FOUR TANKS, APC'S, AND
ARTILLERY TAKEN FROM ABDIC'S "REPUBLIC OF WESTERN BOSNIA."
V CORPS IS EXPECTED TO MOVE SOUTH AND EAST AND EXPECTS TO
TAKE PRIJEDOR. THE UN CITED RUMORS THAT THE HVO AND V
CORPS HAVE ALREADY LINKED UP AT KULEN VAKUF, ABOUT 30
KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF BIHAC ON THE CROATIAN BORDER.

CANTON GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES - AID NEEDS

18. (U) IN BIHAC TOWN, THE DELEGATION MET WITH CANTON
GOVERNOR VELADZIC, PRESIDENT OF THE CANTON GOVERNMENT
FERIZOVIC, AND CANTON PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT ADEM BORIC.
ALL THREE WERE EUPHORIC THAT THE CANTON HAD FINALLY BEEN
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LIBERATED FROM SERBIAN ENCIRCLEMENT. ONLY ONE FRONT
REMAINED INSTEAD OF FOUR, FERIZOVIC OFTEN REPEATED. EVEN
SO, ALL AREAS OF THE CANTON STILL REMAINED WITHIN REACH OF
BSA HEAVY WEAPONS. BIHAC SAFE AREA WAS SHELLED REGULARLY,
RECEIVING 6 SHELLS LATE ON AUGUST 9. THE GOVERNOR
OUTLINED A LONG WISH LIST OF ITEMS THAT THE AREA
DESPERATELY NEEDED. HE WAS CRITICAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY'S LACK OF IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION. FIVE DAYS AFTER ITS LIBERATION,
ONLY A "SYMBOLIC QUANTITY" OF ASSISTANCE HAD ARRIVED
DESPITE OPEN ROADS FROM CROATIA, VELADZIC INSISTED.
(NOTE: THE QUICKEST ROUTE FROM ZAGREB TO VELIKA Kladusa,
THROUGH VOJNIC, WAS BLOCKED IN CROATIA ON AUGUST 11 BY
FLEEING COLUMNS OF REFUGEES LOYAL TO OPPORTUNISTIC MUSLIM
LEADER FIKRET ABDIC. SEE SEPTEL. END NOTE.)

19. (U) ONLY ONE CONVOY HAD ARRIVED IN THE AREA FOR 13
MONTHS, FERIZOVIC STATED THE POCKET'S POPULATION HAD
BEEN CUT OFF FOR FOUR YEARS AND EVERYONE INSIDE, EITHER IN
THEIR OWN HOME OR DISPLACED, SUFFERED EQUALLY. VELADZIC'S
WISH LIST FOLLOWS IN HIS ORDER OF NECESSITY:

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INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00	SRPP-00
	EB-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-06	L-01
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	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-01	PMB-00	PRME-01
	PRMC-01	DRL-09	G-00	/030W			

-----E2BE60 121604Z /38

O 121538Z AUG 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6886
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE//J3/J4/J5/POLAD//
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE//DO/LG/XOX/IN/POLAD//
DIA WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
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USLO SKOPJE
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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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COMSIXTHFLT //N2//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ3/ECJ4/ECJ5/ECPOLAD//
JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
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-- IMMEDIATE NEEDS WERE FOOD, SHOES, AND CLOTHING,
ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN;

-- MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, VETERINARY
SU

PPLIES, RESERVE PARTS FOR HOSPITAL MACHINES;

-- SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND BOOKS;

-- SHELTER MATERIALS FOR IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM
HOUSING;

-- IMPROVEMENTS FOR INDUSTRIAL PLANTS DESTROYED BY
SHELLING;

-- IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNAL SERVICES SUCH AS WATER,
ELECTRICITY, TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS,
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AND GARBAGE DISPOSAL;

-- BUSES AND TRUCKS TO BE USED FOR INTER-MUNICIPAL
PUBLIC TRANSPORT;

110. (U) VELADZIC BELIEVED THAT THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY
NOW EXISTED TO START UP "REAL" LIFE AGAIN. THE ENCLAVE
WANTED TO STOP ITS DEPENDENCY ON HUMANITARIAN HELP AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. HE URGED THAT ASSISTANCE BE DIRECTED TOWARDS
RESTARTING INDUSTRIES AND ALLOWING PEOPLE TO EARN A
LIVELIHOOD, SO THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE DEPENDENT ON AID.

POLITICAL SITUATION IN BIHAC AND CAZIN

111. (U) CANTON PRESIDENT FERIZOVIC STRESSED THAT,
ALTHOUGH NINETY PERCENT MUSLIM, THE CANTON WELCOMED ALL
NATIONALITIES. HE STRESSED THAT A GENERAL AMNESTY WOULD
BE GRANTED FOR EVERYONE WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT,
BUT WAR CRIMINALS (PARTICULARLY ABDIC) WOULD BE PURSUED.
FERIZOVIC SAID THAT THERE IS EXTREMELY GOOD COOPERATION
WITH THE CROATIAN POPULATION WHICH COULD BE AN EXAMPLE FOR
THE REST OF BOSNIA. (THIS POINT WAS MENTIONED EARLIER BY
BALLANTYNE, WHO NOTED THERE IS AN HVO BRIGADE WITH V
CORPS.) IT WAS PROUDLY NOTED THAT THE CANTONAL GOVERNMENT
WAS FORMED IN 15 DAYS AFTER THE MAY 27 MEETING OF THE
LOCAL PARLIAMENT. LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS COME FROM
BOTH THE DOMINANT MUSLIM SDA AND ALSO THE CROAT HDZ.

112. (U) FERIZOVIC SAID THAT AT LEAST IN BIHAC, THE
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FEDERATION AND REPUBLIC GOVERNMENTS ARE FULLY INTEGRATED.
THE CANTONAL AUTHORITIES ARE MOVING TO ESTABLISH BORDER
CONTROLS AND ARE PURSUING CONTACTS WITH THE GOC ON ISSUES
SUCH AS ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION AND MAIL.

VILLAGE SCENES

113. (U) DURING OUR DRIVE THROUGH THE POCKET WE SAW LIFE
RETURNING TO SOME SEMBLANCE OF NORMALITY. A NUMBER OF
PEOPLE WERE OUT AND ABOUT EVEN IN THE TOWNS, SUNBATHING,
AND PLAYING IN THE RIVERS. THE BIHAC AUTHORITIES AND V
CORPS ESCORT SHOWED US OUTLYING VILLAGES DESTROYED BY THE
"ARSK." IN ZAVALJE, A CROATIAN VILLAGE, ONE OLD WOMAN HAD
RETURNED THAT SAME DAY TO CHECK ON HER PROPERTY. IT HAD
BEEN LIBERATED ONLY DAYS BEFORE. IN THE MUSLIM VILLAGE OF
SOKOLAC, LIBERATED BY THE ABH A FEW MONTHS BEFORE, WE MET
AN ELDERLY MAN WHO RETURNED TO HIS BURNED OUT HOUSE AND
PROPERTY EVERY SO OFTEN TO FIX SMALL DETAILS IN HIS HOUSE
AND TO CUT HIS LAWN.

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ACTION EUR-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00	SRPP-00
	EB-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-06	L-01
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	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-01	PMB-00	PRME-01
	PRMC-01	DRL-09	G-00	/030W			

-----E2BE65 121604Z /38

O 121538Z AUG 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6887
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE//J3/J4/J5/POLAD//
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COMSIXTHFLT //N2//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ3/ECJ4/ECJ5/ECPOLAD//
JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
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14. SARAJEVO MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

FINN

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